# Moments with the Consoling Christ

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# MOMENTS WITH THE CONSOLING CHRIST

# Moments with the Consoling Christ

PRAYERS SELECTED FROM
THOMAS À KEMPIS

BY

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WITH FOREWORD BY
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BISHOP OF NEWARK

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TO

MARY IMMACULATE

THE VALIANT WOMAN

*Mother of the Consoling Christ*

EXEMPLAR

OF

HEROIC WOMANHOOD

# FOREWORD

DURING the last five centuries men and women, weighed down with the cares of life, have gathered strength and courage and comfort by reflecting on the thoughts of Thomas à Kempis. So personal is the message which his writings convey that, open them where you will, the passage that first meets the eye seems to be singularly suited to the needs of each individual soul.

With the philosophy, reflections and quotations in the works of this ascetical writer are interwoven beautiful prayers, concealed like hidden treasures, just as in Holy Scripture the prayers which so effectively touched the Heart of Christ when He was on earth are sometimes lost sight of, surrounded as they are by the vivid descriptions and striking illustrations of the Sacred Text.

Doctor Dillon has collected the prayers of à Kempis and arranged them under well-chosen titles into this little volume. The words of the text have not been

altered. Hence their solidity and efficacy remain.

At no time in the history of the world has prayer been more urgent and imperative. In attendance at Mass, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, preparation and thanksgiving for Confession and Communion, the use of this prayer book will do much to increase fervor and devotion. And when difficulties perplex, temptations assail and sorrow overwhelms, I am confident that troubled souls will find adequate expression of their spiritual wants in "Moments with the Consoling Christ."

✠ John J. O'Connor
*Bishop of Newark*

*Feast of All Saints*
*1918*

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# The Cross of Christ

God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

— *Gal. 6 : 14.*

O CROSS of my Saviour! I adore Thee, I embrace thee with the most profound humility, the most ardent love.

O CROSS, how happy art thou to have pillowed the thorn-crowned head of the Holy of Holies, and supported His nail-pierced feet! Thou art forever sanctified by the body of Jesus and consecrated by His blood.

THOU art the bed of pain which heard the last words and received the last sigh of the Son of God; the altar upon which He offered Himself for the sins of the world. Thou art the Ark of the Covenant bearing the Author of the Old and the New Testament, the urn of gold enclosing the hidden Manna, the treasury of the riches of heaven.

BLESSED Cross! from thee have come the Sacraments of the Church. By thee Priests are consecrated, the sick receive the last anointing, the dying are strengthened and comforted.

O CROSS of my Redeemer and my God, how sweet and powerful thou art to heal the wounds of our soul, to comfort our sorrowing hearts! Thou hast brought salvation and joy to the world, and plunged into hell the demons of gloom and despair.

THOU art the hope of the faithful, the shield of martyrs, the strength of confessors, the crown of virgins, the consolation of the sorrowing, the support of old age, the guide of youth, and the refuge of all in tribulation.

PRECIOUS tree, thou that hast borne on thy branches the Fruit of Life, and witnessed the anguish of the Mother of Jesus, grant that at my death I may be received by Him to whom thou hast served as the instrument of my salvation. AMEN.

# Christ our Divine Teacher

Direct me in Thy truth; and teach me; for Thou art God my Saviour; and on Thee have I waited all the day long.
— *Ps. 24 : 5.*

O TRUTH! my God! make me one with Thee in everlasting love. I am often wearied with the many things I read and hear; in Thee is all that I wish or long for.

LET all teachers hold their peace, and all created things keep silence in Thy presence; do Thou alone speak to me.

HELP me, O Lord God, in my good purpose and in Thy holy service, and grant that I may this day begin indeed, since what I have hitherto done is nothing.

SPEAK, Lord, for Thy servant heareth. I am Thy servant; give me understanding, that I may know Thy testimonies.

INCLINE my heart to the words of Thy mouth; let Thy speech distill as the dew.

HERETOFORE the children of Israel said to Moses: Speak thou to us, and we will hear; let not the Lord speak to us, lest we die.

IT is not thus, O Lord, it is not thus I pray; but rather with the Prophet Samuel I humbly and earnestly entreat: Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.

LET not Moses, nor any of the Prophets, speak to me; but speak Thou rather, O Lord God, the Inspirer and Enlightener of all the Prophets; for Thou alone, without them, canst perfectly instruct me; but they, without Thee, will avail me nothing.

THEY may indeed sound forth words, but they give not the spirit.

MOST beautifully do they speak; but if Thou be silent, they inflame not the heart.

THEY give the letter, but Thou disclosest the sense.

THEY publish the mysteries, but Thou unlockest the meaning of the things signified.

THEY declare the commandments, but Thou enablest us to fulfill them.

THEY show the way, but Thou givest strength to walk in it.

WHAT they can do is only from without, but Thou instructest and enlightenest the heart.

THEY water outwardly, but Thou givest the increase.

THEY cry aloud in words, but Thou impartest understanding to the hearing.

LET not, then, Moses speak to us, but Thou, O Lord my God, the eternal

Truth, lest I die and prove fruitless, if I be admonished only outwardly, and not inflamed within.

LEST it be to my condemnation that the word be heard and not fulfilled, known and not loved, believed and not observed.

SPEAK then, O Lord, for Thy servant heareth: for Thou hast the words of eternal life.

SPEAK to me, that it may be some comfort to my soul, and the amendment of my whole life; and also to Thy praise, and glory, and everlasting honor.

BLESSED is the man whom Thou, O Lord, shalt instruct, and shalt teach him Thy law; that Thou mayest give him rest from the evil days and that he may not be desolate upon earth.

## Christ our Bountiful Good

I will show thee, O man, what is good, and what the Lord requireth of thee. Verily to do judgment, and to love mercy, and to walk solicitous with thy God. — *Mi. 6 : 8.*

O LORD my God, Thou art all my good; and who am I that I should dare to speak to Thee?

I AM Thy most poor servant, and a wretched little worm, much more poor and contemptible than I can conceive or dare express.

YET remember, O Lord, that I am nothing, I have nothing, and can do nothing.

THOU alone art good, just, and holy; Thou canst do all things; Thou givest all things; Thou fillest all things, leaving only the sinner empty.

REMEMBER Thy tender mercies, and fill my heart with Thy grace, Thou who wilt not that Thy works should be void.

HOW can I support myself in this wretched life, unless Thy mercy and grace strengthen me?

TURN not away Thy face from me; delay not Thy visitation, withdraw not Thy comfort, lest my soul become as earth without water to Thee.

O LORD, teach me to do Thy will; teach me to converse worthily and humbly in Thy sight; for Thou art my wisdom; Thou knowest me in the truth, and didst know me before the world was made, and before I was born in the world.

LORD, teach me, I beseech Thee, the way of truth, that I may always seek Thee in simplicity of heart.

LET Thy Truth teach me, let it guard me, and preserve me unto a happy end.

LET it deliver me from all evil affection and inordinate love, and I shall walk with Thee in great freedom of heart.

## Christ our Safe Refuge

Our God is our refuge and strength —
a helper in troubles. — *Ps. 45 : 1.*

I BLESS Thee, O heavenly Father, Father of my Lord Jesus Christ, because Thou has vouchsafed to be mindful of me, poor as I am.

O FATHER of mercies, and God of all consolation, I give thanks to Thee, that sometimes Thou art pleased to cherish with Thy consolation, me who am unworthy of any consolation.

I BLESS and glorify Thee evermore, together with Thy only-begotten Son and the Holy Ghost the Comforter, forever and ever.

O LORD God, my holy lover, when Thou shalt come into my heart, all that is within me shall be filled with joy.

THOU art my glory and the exultation of my heart.

THOU art my hope and my refuge in the day of tribulation.

BUT because I am as yet weak in love and imperfect in virtue, therefore do I stand in need of being strengthened and comforted by Thee. Wherefore do Thou visit me often and instruct me in Thy holy discipline.

FREE me from evil passions and cure my heart of all disorderly affections; so that inwardly healed and well purified, I may become apt to love, courageous to suffer, and steadfast to persevere.

O MY God, my Love, Thou art all mine, and I am all Thine.

ENLARGE Thou me in love, that I may learn to taste with the interior

mouth of the heart how sweet it is to love, and to be dissolved, and to bathe in love.

LET me be possessed by love, mounting up above myself through excess of fervor and ecstasy.

LET me sing the canticle of love, let me follow Thee, my Beloved, on high, let my soul quite lose herself in Thy praises, jubilant in Thy love.

LET me love Thee more than myself, and myself only for Thee, and all others in Thee, who truly love Thee, as the law of love commandeth, which shineth forth from Thee.

## Christ our Pledge of Grace

If I have found favour in Thy sight, show me Thy Face, that I may know Thee, and may find grace before Thy eyes. — *Ex. 33 : 13.*

I WILL speak to my Lord, whereas I am dust and ashes.

IF I repute myself greater than this, behold, Thou standest against me; and my sins bear a true testimony, and I cannot contradict it.

BUT if I abase myself, and bring myself down to very nothingness, and divest myself of all self-esteem, and reduce myself, as I really am, to mere dust, Thy grace will be favorable to me, and Thy light will draw nigh to my heart; and all self-estimation, how small soever, will be sunk in the depth of my own nothingness, and there lose itself forever.

IT is there Thou showest me to myself, what I am, what I have been, and to what I am come; for I am nothing, and I knew it not.

IF I am left to myself, behold, I am nothing, and all weakness; but if Thou suddenly look upon me, I presently become strong, and am replenished with new joy.

AND truly wonderful it is that I am so quickly raised up and so graciously embraced by Thee; I who, by my own weight, am always sinking down to the lowest depths.

IT is Thy love that effects this, gratuitously preventing and assisting me in so many necessities, preserving me also from grievous dangers, and, as I may truly say, rescuing me from innumerable evils.

FOR by a perverse loving of myself, I have lost myself; and by seeking Thee

alone, and purely loving Thee, I have found both myself and Thee; and by this love have more profoundly annihilated myself.

BECAUSE Thou, O most sweet Lord, dost deal with me above all desert, and above all that I dare hope or ask for.

BLESSED be Thou, O my God; for though I am unworthy of all good, yet Thy generosity and infinite goodness never cease to do good even to those who are ungrateful, and that are turned far away from Thee.

OH, convert us unto Thee, that we may be humble, thankful, and devout; for Thou art our salvation, our courage, and our strength.

## Christ our Ardent Desire

I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my Beloved, that you tell Him that I languish with love. — *Cant. 5 : 8.*

NOW I will speak again, O Lord, and will not be silent; I will say in the hearing of my God and my King who is on high:

OH, how great is the abundance of Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou hast hidden for those that fear Thee!

BUT what art Thou to those that love Thee? What to those that serve Thee with their whole heart?

UNSPEAKABLE, indeed, is the sweetness of Thy contemplation, which Thou bestowest on those that love Thee.

IN this most of all hast Thou shown me the sweetness of Thy love, that when

I had no being, Thou didst make me: and when I was straying far from Thee, Thou hast brought me back again, that I might serve Thee; and Thou hast commanded me to love Thee.

O FOUNTAIN of everlasting love, what shall I say of Thee?

HOW can I ever forget Thee, who hast vouchsafed to remember me even after that I was corrupted and was lost?

BEYOND all hope hast Thou shown mercy to Thy servant; and beyond all desert hast Thou manifested Thy grace and friendship.

WHAT return shall I make to Thee for this favor? for it is not granted to all to forsake all things, to renounce the world, and to assume the monastic life.

IS it much that I should serve Thee, whom the whole creation is bound to serve?

IT ought not to seem much to me to serve Thee; but this rather doth appear great and wonderful to me, that Thou vouchsafest to receive one so wretched and unworthy for Thy servant, and to unite Him to Thy Beloved.

BEHOLD all things are Thine which I have, and with which I serve Thee.

AND yet contrariwise Thou rather servest me than I Thee.

LO! heaven and earth, which Thou hast created for the service of man, stand prepared, and daily perform whatsoever Thou hast commanded.

AND this is but little; for Thou hast also created and appointed angels for the service of man.

BUT what transcendeth all this is, that Thou Thyself hast vouchsafed to

serve man, and hast promised that Thou wilt give him Thyself.

WHAT shall I give Thee for all these thousand favors? Would that I could serve Thee all the days of my life!

WOULD that I were able, were it but for one day, to render Thee worthy homage!

VERILY Thou art worthy of all service, all honor, and of eternal praise.

THOU art truly my Lord, and I am Thy poor servant, who am bound with all strength to serve Thee, and ought never to grow weary of praising Thee.

THIS is my will, this is my desire; and whatever is wanting in me do Thou vouchsafe to supply.

IT is a great honor, a great glory, to serve Thee, and to despise all things for Thee.

FOR they who willingly subject themselves to Thy most holy service shall have great grace.

THEY shall experience the most sweet consolation of the Holy Spirit, who for the love of Thee have cast away all carnal delight.

THEY shall gain great freedom of mind, who for Thy name enter upon the narrow way, and relinquish all worldly care.

LORD, I willingly commit all things to Thee, for my care can profit little.

I WISH I was not too much set upon future events, but offered myself with all readiness to Thy divine pleasure.

# Christ our Infallible Truth

Love ye Truth. — *Za. 8 : 19*

O LORD God, patience, I perceive, is very necessary for me, for many adverse things happen to us in this life.

FOR in whatsoever way I may arrange for my peace, my life cannot be without war and sorrow.

THOU thunderest forth over my head Thy judgments, O Lord, and Thou shakest all my bones with fear and trembling, and my soul is terrified exceedingly.

I STAND astonished, and consider that the heavens are not pure in Thy sight.

IF in the angels Thou has found depravity, and hast not spared them, what will become of me?

STARS have fallen from heaven, and I, dust that I am, how can I presume?

THEY whose works seemed praiseworthy have fallen to the very lowest; and those that did eat the bread of angels I have seen delighted with the husks of swine.

THERE is then no sanctity, if Thou, O Lord, withdraw Thy hand.

NO wisdom avails, if Thou cease to govern us.

NO strength is of any help, if Thou cease to preserve us.

NO chastity is secure without Thy protection.

NO self-custody profits us, if Thy holy vigilance be not nigh unto us.

FOR left to ourselves, we sink and perish; but by Thee visited, we are raised up and live.

FOR we are unsteadfast, but by Thee we are strengthened: we are tepid, but by Thee inflamed.

OH, how profoundly ought I to abase myself, under Thy unfathomable judgments, O Lord, where I find myself to be nothing else but nothing, and altogether nothing!

OH, how humbly and lowly ought I to think of myself; of how little worth, whatever good I may seem to have!

O WEIGHT immense! O sea that cannot be passed over, where I find nothing of myself but only and wholly nothing!

WHERE, then, is there any lurking-place for glorying? Where any confidence conceived of my own virtue?

ALL vainglory is swallowed up in the profundity of Thy judgments over me.

WHAT is all flesh in Thy sight?

SHALL clay glory against Him that formed it?

HOW can he be puffed up with vain talk whose heart is subjected to God in truth?

ALL the world will not lift him up whom truth hath subjected to itself.

NEITHER will he be moved with the tongues of all that praise him, who hath settled his whole hope in God.

FOR even they who speak, behold, they are all nothing, for they shall pass away with the sound of their words; but the truth of the Lord remaineth for ever.

## Christ our Firm Confidence

For it is good for me to adhere to my God, to put my hope in the Lord God.
—*Ps. 72: 28.*

LORD, if it be pleasing to Thee, so let it be.

LORD, if it be to Thy honor, let this be done in Thy name.

LORD, if Thou seest that this is expedient, and approvest it as profitable for me, then grant that I may use it to Thy honor.

BUT if Thou knowest that it will be hurtful to me, and not profitable for the salvation of my soul, take away from me such a desire.

FOR not every desire is from the Holy Ghost, though to man it may seem right and good.

LORD, Thou knowest what is best; let this or that be done as Thou wilt.

GIVE what Thou wilt, and as much as Thou wilt, and at what time Thou wilt.

DO with me as Thou knowest, and as best pleaseth Thee, and is most for Thy honor.

PUT me where Thou wilt, and do with me in all things according to Thy will.

I AM in Thy hand; turn me hither and thither as Thou choosest.

LO, I am Thy servant, ready to obey Thee in all things; for I do not desire to live for myself, but for Thee; oh, that I could do so in a worthy and perfect manner!

# Christ our Only Rest

This is my rest forever and ever: Here will I dwell, for I have chosen it.
— *Ps. 131 : 14.*

GRANT me Thy grace, most merciful Jesus, that it may be with me, and labor with me, and continue with me unto the end.

GRANT me always to will and desire that which is most acceptable to Thee, and which pleaseth Thee best.

LET Thy will be mine, and let my will always follow Thine, and agree perfectly with it.

LET me always will or not will the same with Thee; and let me not be able to will or not to will otherwise than as Thou willest or willest not.

GRANT that I may die to all things that are in the world, and for Thy sake

love to be despised, and to be unknown to this world.

GRANT that I may rest in Thee above all things desired, and that my heart may be at peace in Thee.

THOU art the true peace of the heart; Thou art its only rest; out of Thee all things are hard and restless.

IN this peace, in the self-same, that is in Thee, the one sovereign eternal good, I will sleep and take my rest.

BE with me, O Lord Jesus, in all places and at all times.

LET this be my consolation, to be freely willing to forego all human comfort.

AND if Thy comfort be withdrawn, let Thy will and just trial be to me as the greatest of comforts.

FOR Thou wilt not always be angry, nor wilt Thou threaten forever.

LORD, what Thou sayest is true. Greater is Thy care for me than all the care I can take of myself.

FOR at too great a hazard doth he stand who casteth not his whole care on Thee.

LORD, provided that my will remain true and firm towards Thee, do with me whatsoever it shall please Thee.

FOR it cannot but be good, whatever Thou shalt do with me.

IF Thou wilt have me to be in darkness, be Thou blessed; and if Thou wilt have me to be in light, be Thou again blessed; if Thou vouchsafe to comfort me, be Thou blessed; and if it be Thy will I should be afflicted, be Thou still equally blessed.

LORD, I will suffer willingly for Thee whatsoever Thou art pleased should befall me.

I AM willing indifferently to receive from Thy hand good and evil, sweet and bitter, joy and sorrow, and to give Thee thanks for all that happeneth to me.

KEEP me from all sin, and I will fear neither death nor hell.

SO that Thou cast me not off forever, nor blot me out of the book of life, what tribulation soever befalleth me shall not hurt me.

## Christ our Glorious Example

As the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth; in what place soever thou shalt be, my lord king, either in death or in life, there will thy servant be.
— *2 Kings 15 : 21.*

LORD, because Thou wast patient in Thy life-time, herein especially fulfilling the commandment of Thy Father, it is fitting that I, a wretched sinner, should, according to Thy will, bear myself patiently, and, as long as Thou pleasest, support the burden of this corruptible life, in order to my salvation.

FOR though this present life is felt to be burdensome, yet it is now rendered, through Thy grace, very meritorious; and by Thy example and the footsteps of Thy Saints, more bright and supportable to the weak.

IT is also much more full of consolation than it was formerly under the law, when

the gate of heaven remained shut; and even the way to heaven seemed more obscure, when so few concerned themselves to seek the kingdom of heaven.

MOREOVER, too, they who were then just, and to be saved, could not enter into Thy heavenly kingdom before Thy Passion, and the payment of our debt by Thy sacred death.

OH, what great thanks am I bound to render unto Thee, for having vouchsafed to show me and all the faithful a right and good way to Thine everlasting kingdom!

FOR Thy life is our way; and by holy patience we walk on to Thee, who art our crown.

IF Thou hadst not gone before and instructed us, who would have cared to follow?

ALAS, how many would have stayed afar off and a great way behind, had

they not before their eyes Thy glorious example!

BEHOLD we are still tepid, notwithstanding all Thy miracles and instructions we have heard; what, then, would it be if we had not so great light to follow Thee?

## Christ our Place of Strength

Be Thou unto me a God, a protector and a place of strength: That Thou mayest make me safe. — *Ps. 70 : 3.*

I WILL confess against myself my injustice; I will confess to Thee, O Lord, my infirmity.

IT is oftentimes a small thing which casteth me down and troubleth me.

I PURPOSE to behave myself valiantly; but when a small temptation cometh, I am brought into great straits.

IT is sometimes a very trifling thing whence a grievous temptation proceedeth.

AND when I think myself somewhat safe, when I least apprehend it, I find myself sometimes almost overcome by a light blast.

BEHOLD, then, O Lord, my abjection and frailty, every way known to Thee.

HAVE pity on me, and draw me out of the mire, that I stick not fast therein, that I may not be utterly cast down forever.

THIS it is which often drives me back, and confounds me in Thy sight, that I am so subject to fall, and so powerless to resist my passions.

AND although I do not altogether consent, yet their assaults are troublesome and grievous to me; and I am weary of thus always living in conflict.

HENCE my infirmity is made known to me; because abominable imaginations much more easily rush in upon me than they forsake me.

OH, that Thou, the most mighty God of Israel, zealous Lover of faithful souls,

wouldst regard the labor and sorrow of Thy servant, and stand by him in all his undertakings!

STRENGTHEN me with heavenly fortitude, lest the old man, the miserable flesh not fully subdued to the spirit, prevail and get the upper hand; against which we must battle so long as we breathe in this most wretched life.

## Christ our Anchor of Hope

I cried unto Thee, O Lord, and said: Thou art my hope, my portion in the land of the living. — *Ps. 141 : 6.*

ABOVE all things, and in all things, do thou, my soul, rest always in the Lord, for He is the eternal rest of the saints.

GIVE me, O most sweet and loving Jesus, to repose in Thee above all things created: above all health and beauty; above all glory and honor; above all power and dignity; above all knowledge and subtlety; above all riches and arts; above all joy and gladness; above all fame and praise; above all sweetness and consolation; above all hope and promise; above all merit and desire; above all gifts and presents that Thou canst give and infuse; above all joy and jubilation that the mind can contain or feel; in fine, above all angels and archangels, and all the host of heaven; above

all things visible and invisible; and above all that is not Thee, my God; for Thou, my God, art supremely good above all things.

THOU alone art high; Thou alone most powerful; Thou alone most full and most sufficient; Thou alone most sweet and most full of consolation.

THOU alone most beautiful and most loving; Thou alone most noble and most glorious above all things; in whom are all that are both good and perfect, and always have been and always will be.

AND therefore all is too little and insufficient, whatever Thou bestowest upon me, that is not Thyself; and whatever Thou revealest to me concerning Thyself, or promisest, as long as I see Thee not, nor fully possess Thee; because indeed my heart cannot truly rest, nor be entirely contented, till it rest in Thee, and transcend every gift and every creature.

O MY most beloved Spouse, Christ Jesus, most pure Lover, Lord of the whole creation! who will give me the wings of true liberty, to fly and repose in Thee?

OH, when shall it be fully granted me to be free, and to see how sweet Thou art, O Lord my God?

WHEN shall I fully collect myself in Thee, that through Thy love I may not feel myself, but Thee alone, above all feeling and measure, in a manner not known to all?

BUT now I often lament, and bear with grief, my unhappiness.

BECAUSE many evils happen in this vale of miseries, which frequently disturb me, afflict me, and cast a cloud over me; often do they hinder and distract me, allure and entangle me, so that I can neither have free access to Thee, nor enjoy Thy sweet embraces, which are ever present to blessed spirits.

OH, let my sighs move Thee, and this my manifold desolation upon earth.

O JESUS, Brightness of eternal glory, the Comfort of the pilgrim souls, with Thee is my mouth without voice, and my silence speaketh to Thee.

HOW long doth my Lord delay to come? Let Him come to me, His poor servant, and make me joyful. Let Him stretch forth His hand, and deliver me, wretched, from all anguish.

COME, oh, come, for without Thee I can never have one joyful day nor hour; for Thou art my joy, and without Thee my table is empty.

I AM miserable, and in a manner imprisoned, and weighed down with fetters, till, with the light of Thy presence, Thou comfortest me, givest me liberty and showest me Thy friendly countenance.

LET others seek, instead of Thee, whatever else they please; nothing else meanwhile doth or shall please me, but Thou, my God, my hope, my eternal salvation.

I WILL not hold my peace, nor will I cease to pray, till Thy grace return, and Thou sayest interiorly to me: Behold, here I am; behold, I come to thee, because thou hast called Me.

THY tears, and the desire of thy soul, thy humiliation and contrition of heart, have inclined and brought Me to thee.

AND I said, O Lord, I have called upon Thee, and have desired to enjoy Thee, and am prepared to reject all things for Thy sake.

FOR Thou didst first stir me up, that I should seek Thee. Be Thou therefore blessed, O Lord, who hath showed this goodness to Thy servant, according to the multitude of Thy mercies.

WHAT more hath Thy servant to say in Thy presence, but to humble himself exceedingly before Thee, mindful always of his own iniquity and vileness?

FOR there is none like to Thee amongst all the wonders of heaven and earth.

THY works are exceedingly good, Thy judgments true, and by Thy providence the universe is ruled.

PRAISE, therefore, and glory be to Thee, O Wisdom of the Father; let my tongue, my soul, and all things created, join in praising and blessing Thee.

## Christ our Just Law

My son, forget not My law, and let thy heart keep My commandments.

— *Prov. 3 : 1.*

OPEN, O Lord, my heart, in Thy law, and teach me to walk in Thy commandments.

GIVE me grace to understand Thy will, and to commemorate, with great reverence and diligent consideration, all Thy benefits, as well in general as in particular, so that henceforward I may be able worthily to return thanks for them.

I KNOW and confess, indeed, that I am not able to return Thee due thanks of praise, not even for the least.

I AM less than any of Thy benefits bestowed upon me; and when I consider Thy excellency, my spirit fainteth before the greatness thereof.

ALL things that we have in soul and body, and whatsoever outwardly and inwardly, naturally or supernaturally, we possess, are Thy benefits, and celebrate Thy bounty, mercy, and goodness, from whom we have received all good.

ALTHOUGH one hath received more, another less, yet all are Thine, and without Thee even the least cannot be had.

HE who hath received greater things, cannot glory of his own merit, nor extol himself above others, nor exult over the lesser; because he is indeed greater and better, who attributeth less to himself, and is more humble and devout in returning thanks.

AND he who esteemeth himself the vilest of all men, and judgeth himself the most unworthy, is fitted to receive still greater blessings.

BUT he who hath received fewer ought not to be saddened, nor take it ill, nor

envy him that is more enriched; but attend rather to Thee, and very much praise Thy goodness, for that Thou bestowest Thy gifts so plentifully, so freely and willingly, without acceptance of persons.

ALL things are from Thee, and therefore Thou art to be praised in all.

THOU knowest what is expedient to be given to each; and why this one hath less, and the other more, is not ours to decide, but Thine, with whom are determined the merits of each.

WHEREFORE, O Lord God, I deem it a great benefit not to have much which outwardly and according to men might appear praiseworthy and glorious; for Thou, O God, hast chosen the poor and the humble, and those that are despised by this world, for Thy familiar friends and domestics.

THE Apostles themselves are witnesses, whom Thou hast appointed rulers over the whole earth.

AND yet they lived in this world without complaint, so humble and simple without any malice or guile, that they even rejoiced to suffer reproaches for Thy name; and what things the world flies from, those they embraced with great affection.

NOTHING, therefore, ought to give so great a joy to one that loveth Thee and knoweth Thy benefits, as the accomplishment of Thy will in himself, and the good pleasure of Thy eternal appointment.

WITH which He ought to be so far contented and comforted as to be as willing to be the least as any one would wish to be the greatest; to enjoy as much peace and content in the lowest place as in the highest; and to be as willing to be despicable and mean and of no name and repute, as to be more honorable and of greater rank in the world than others.

FOR Thy will and the love of Thy honor ought to take precedence of all

things, and to comfort and please one more than any benefits whatsoever which have been or can be given.

BUT Thou, O Lord, who canst do all things, and always lovest the profit of the soul, increase in me a greater grace, that I may fulfill this Thy work, and accomplish my salvation.

## Christ our Living Way

Lead me, O Lord, in Thy way, and I will walk in Thy truth; let my heart rejoice that it may fear Thy name.
— *Ps. 85 : 11.*

O LORD, my God, depart not far from me; O my God, have regard to help me; for divers evil thoughts have risen up against me, and great fears afflict my soul.

HOW shall I pass without hurt? How shall I break through them?

LET all wicked thoughts, O Lord, fly from before Thy face.

THIS is my hope and my only comfort, to fly to Thee in all tribulations, to confide in Thee, to call on Thee from my inmost heart, and patiently to look for Thy consolation.

MAY Thy grace, O Lord, make that possible to me, which seems impossible to me by nature.

THOU knowest that I can bear but little, and that I am quickly cast down by a small adversity.

LET all exercises of tribulation become lovely and most desirable to me, for Thy name's sake: for to suffer and to be afflicted for Thee is very healthful for my soul.

## Christ our Unfailing Light

In Thy light we shall see light.
— *Ps. 35 : 10.*

ENLIGHTEN me, O good Jesus, with the brightness of internal light, and cast out all darkness from the dwelling of my heart.

RESTRAIN my many wandering thoughts, and destroy the temptations that violently assault me.

FIGHT strongly for me, and overcome these wicked beasts, these alluring concupiscences, that peace may be made in Thy power, and the abundance of Thy praise may resound in Thy holy court, that is, a clean conscience.

COMMAND the winds and storms; say to the sea: Be still; to the north wind, Blow thou not; and there shall be a great calm.

SEND forth Thy light and Thy truth, that they may shine upon the earth; for I am an earth that is empty and void, till Thou enlightenest me.

POUR forth Thy grace from above; water my heart with the dew of heaven; supply fresh waters of devotion, to wash the face of the earth, to bring forth good and perfect fruit.

LIFT up my mind, oppressed with the load of sins, and raise my whole desire towards heavenly things; that having tasted the sweetness of supernal happiness, I may have no pleasure in thinking of the things of earth.

DRAW me away, and deliver me from all unstable comfort of creatures; for no created thing can fully quiet and satisfy my desire.

JOIN me to Thyself by an inseparable bond of love; for Thou alone art sufficient for the soul that loveth Thee, and without Thee all other things are frivolous.

## Christ our Faithful Guide

I will give thee understanding and I will instruct thee in the way thou shalt go; I will fix mine eyes upon thee.
— *Ps. 31 : 8.*

LORD, this is the work of a perfect man, never to let the mind slacken from attending to heavenly things, and to pass through many cares, as it were without care; not after the manner of an indolent person, but by a certain prerogative of a free mind, not cleaving with an inordinate affection to anything created.

PRESERVE me, I beseech Thee, O my most merciful Lord, from the cares of this life, that I be not too much entangled by them; from the many necessities of the body, that I be not ensnared by pleasure; and from all hindrances of the soul, lest, being overcome by troubles, I be quite cast down.

I DO not say from those things which worldly vanity covets with so much

eagerness; but from those miseries, which, by the general curse of our mortality, as punishments, weigh down and keep back the soul of Thy servant from being able, when it will, to enter into liberty of spirit.

O MY God, who art unspeakable sweetness, make me look upon as bitter, all carnal comfort which withdraws me from the love of things eternal, and wickedly allures me to itself, by setting before me a certain present delightful good.

O MY God, let not flesh and blood prevail over me; let it not overcome me; let not the world and its transitory glory deceive me; let not the devil supplant me by his craftiness.

GIVE me courage to resist, patience to endure, and constancy to persevere.

GIVE me, instead of all worldly consolation, the most sweet unction of Thy

spirit; and instead of carnal love, infuse into me the love of Thy name.

BEHOLD, eating, drinking, clothing, and other necessaries pertaining to the support of the body, are burdensome to a fervent spirit.

GRANT that I may use such things with moderation, and not be entangled with any inordinate affection.

IT is not lawful to cast them all away, for nature must be supported; but to require superfluities, and such things as are most delightful, Thy holy law forbids; for otherwise the flesh would grow insolent against the spirit.

IN all this I beseech Thee let Thy hand govern and direct me, that I may in no way exceed.

# Christ our Hidden Wisdom

> And God hath given to me to speak as I would, and to conceive thoughts worthy of those things that are given me; because He is the guide of wisdom, and the director of the wise.
>
> — *Wis. 7 : 15.*

CONFIRM me, O God, by the grace of Thy Holy Spirit. Grant me power to be strengthened in the inward man, and to cast out of my heart all unprofitable care and trouble. Let me not be drawn away with various desires of any thing whatsoever, whether it be of little or great value; but teach me to look upon all things as passing away, and myself as passing along with them.

FOR nothing is lasting under the sun, where all is vanity and affliction of spirit. Oh, how wise is he who considers things in this manner!

GRANT me, O Lord, heavenly wisdom, that I may learn above all things

to seek Thee, and to find Thee; above all things to relish Thee and to love Thee; and to understand all other things as they are, according to the order of Thy wisdom.

GRANT that I may prudently avoid him that flattereth me, and patiently bear with him that contradicteth me.

FOR it is great wisdom not to be moved with every kind of words, nor to give ear to the wicked flattering siren; for thus shall we go on securely in the way we have begun.

## Christ our Merciful Deliverer

Keep Thou my soul, and deliver me. — *Ps. 24 : 20.*

BLESSED, O Lord, be Thy name forever, who hast been pleased that this trial and tribulation should come upon me.

I CANNOT escape it, but must of necessity fly to Thee; that Thou mayest help me, and turn it to my good.

LORD, I am now in tribulation, and my heart is not at ease; but I am much afflicted with my present suffering.

AND now, beloved Father, what shall I say? I am taken, Lord, in these straits; Oh, save me from this hour!

BUT for this reason I came unto this hour, that Thou mightest be glorified,

when I shall be exceedingly humbled, and delivered by Thee.

MAY it please Thee, O Lord, to deliver me; for, poor wretch that I am, what can I do, and whither shall I go without Thee?

GIVE me patience, O Lord, at this time also.

HELP me, O my God, and I will not fear how much soever I may be oppressed.

AND now in the midst of these things, what shall I say? Lord, Thy will be done; I have well deserved to be afflicted and troubled.

I MUST needs bear it, and would that it were with patience, till the storm pass over, and it grow better.

BUT Thy Almighty hand is able to take away from me this temptation also,

and to moderate its violence, as Thou hast often done heretofore for me, lest I quite sink under it, O my God, my mercy!

AND how much the more difficult this is to me, so much the easier to Thee is this change of the right hand of the Most High.

LORD, I stand much in need of a grace yet greater, if I must arrive so far that it may not be in the power of any man nor any thing created to hinder me.

FOR as long as any thing holds me back, I cannot freely fly to Thee.

HE was desirous to fly freely to Thee who said: Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest?

## Christ our Strong Defence

Take up Thy arms and buckler, arise to help me. Say to my soul, I am thy Saviour. — *Ps. 34 : 2–3.*

BEHOLD, my God and my all! What would I more, and what greater happiness can I desire?

O SWEET and savory Word! but to him that loveth the Word, not the world nor the things that are in the world.

MY God and my all! To one that understandeth sufficient is said; to one that loveth, to repeat it often is delightful.

FOR when Thou art present, all things yield delight; but when Thou art absent, all things are loathsome.

THOU givest a tranquil heart, great peace, and festive joy.

THOU makest us to think well of all things, and praise Thee in all things, nor can anything without Thee afford any lasting pleasure; but to make it agreeable and well-pleasing to us, Thy grace must be present, and it must be seasoned with the savor of Thy wisdom.

O LIGHT eternal, transcending all created lights, dart forth Thy light from above, that it may penetrate all the secret recesses of my heart.

CLEANSE, cheer, enlighten, and enliven my spirit with its powers, that it may be absorbed in Thee with ecstasies of joy.

OH, when will this blessed and desirable hour come, when Thou shalt fill me with Thy presence, and become to me all in all?

SO long as this is not granted, my joy will not be full.

ALAS, the old man is still living in me; he is not wholly crucified, he is not perfectly dead.

HE still lusts strongly against the spirit; he wages war within me, and suffers not the kingdom of my soul to be quiet.

BUT Thou, who rulest over the power of the sea, and stillest the motion of its waves, arise and help me.

SCATTER Thou the nations that delight in wars; crush them by Thy power.

SHOW forth, I beseech Thee, Thy wonderful works, and let Thy right hand be glorified; for there is no hope nor refuge for me but in Thee, O Lord my God.

## Christ our Future Glory

I will give glory to Thee because Thou hast heard me; and art become my salvation. — *Ps. 117 : 21*

LORD, what is man, that Thou art mindful of him; or the son of man, that Thou visitest him?

WHAT hath man deserved, that Thou shouldst give him Thy grace?

LORD, what cause have I to complain, if Thou forsake me? or what can I justly allege, if Thou refuse to grant my petition?

THIS, indeed, I may truly think and say: Lord, I am nothing, I can do nothing, I have nothing of myself that is good; but I fail and am defective in all things, and ever tend to nothing.

AND unless I am supported and interiorly instructed by Thee, I become quite tepid and relaxed.

BUT Thou, O Lord, art always the same, and endurest forever; always good, just and holy; doing all things well, justly and holily; and disposing them in wisdom.

BUT I, who am more inclined to go back than to go forward, continue not always in one state; for seven different times are changed over me.

YET it quickly becometh better when it pleaseth Thee, and Thou stretchest out Thy helping hand; for Thou alone, without man's aid, canst assist and so strengthen me, that my countenance shall be no more changed, but my heart shall be converted, and take its rest in Thee alone.

WHEREFORE, if I did but well know how to cast away from me all hu-

man comfort, either for the sake of devotion, or through the necessity of seeking Thee, because there is no man that can comfort me, then might I justly depend on Thy grace and rejoice in the gift of new consolation.

THANKS be to Thee, from whom all proceeds, as often as it goes well with me.

I, INDEED, am but vanity, and nothing in Thy sight; an inconstant and weak man.

WHAT have I, then, to glory in? or why do I desire to be esteemed? But true glory and holy joy is to glory in Thee, and not in one's self; to rejoice in Thy name, and not to be delighted in one's own virtue, nor in any creature, save only for Thy sake.

LET Thy name be praised, not mine; let Thy work be extolled, not mine; let Thy holy name be blessed, but to me let

nothing be attributed of the praises of men.

THOU art my glory, Thou art the joy of my heart.

IN Thee will I glory, and rejoice all the day; but for myself I will glory in nothing but in my infirmities.

LET the Jews seek the glory which one man receives from another: I will seek that which is from God alone.

ALL human glory, all temporal honor, all worldly grandeur, compared to Thy eternal glory, is but vanity and folly.

O MY truth and my mercy! my God! O blessed Trinity! to Thee alone be all praise, honor, power, and glory, for endless ages of ages.

## Christ our True Friend

Love Him, and keep Him for thy Friend, who when all go away, will not forsake thee, nor suffer thee to perish at the last. — *À Kempis.*

LORD, we are in blindness, and are quickly seduced by vanity. If I look well into myself, never was any injury done me by any creature, and therefore I cannot justly complain of Thee.

BUT since I have often and grievously sinned against Thee, every creature is deservedly armed against me.

TO me therefore confusion and contempt are justly due; but to Thee praise, honor and glory.

AND unless I put myself in this disposition, to be willing to be despised and forsaken by all creatures, and to be esteemed altogether nothing, I cannot

arrive at inward peace and strength, nor be spiritually enlightened, nor fully united to Thee.

GRANT me help, O Lord, in my tribulation, for vain is the aid of man.

HOW often have I not found faithfulness there where I thought I might depend upon it.

AND how often have I found it where I did not expect it.

VAIN therefore is all hope in man; but the safety of the just is in Thee, O Lord.

BLESSED be Thou, O Lord my God, in all things that befall us.

WE are weak and unsteadfast, we are easily deceived and changed.

WHO is the man that is able to keep himself so warily and so circumspectly

in all things, as not to fall sometimes into delusion or perplexity?

BUT he that trusts in Thee, O Lord, and seeks Thee with a simple heart, does not so easily fall.

AND if he falls into some tribulation, in what manner soever he may be entangled therewith, he will be quickly rescued or comforted by Thee; for Thou wilt not forsake forever him that trusts in Thee.

A TRUSTY friend is rarely to be found, that continues faithful in all the distresses of his friend.

THOU, O Lord, Thou alone art most faithful in all things, and besides Thee, there is no other such.

OH, how wise was that holy soul that said: My mind is strongly settled and grounded upon Christ.

IF it were so with me, the fear of man would not so easily give me trouble, nor flying words move me.

WHO can foresee all things, or who is able to provide against future evils?

IF things foreseen do nevertheless often hurt us, how can things unlooked for fail to wound us grievously?

BUT why did I not provide better for myself, miserable wretch that I am? Why also have I so easily placed confidence in others?

BUT we are men, and but frail men, though by many we are reputed and called angels.

IN whom shall I put my trust, O Lord, in whom but Thee? Thou art the Truth, which canst neither deceive nor be deceived.

AND on the other hand, every man is a liar, weak, unstable, and subject to fail, especially in words; so that we ought not readily to believe even that which in appearance seems to sound well.

HOW wisely dost thou forewarn us to take heed of men, and that a man's enemies are those of his own household, and that we are not to believe, if any one should say: Behold here, or behold there.

I HAVE been taught to my cost, and I wish it may serve to make me more cautious, and not increase my folly.

BE wary, saith one, be wary, keep to thyself what I tell thee. And whilst I hold my peace, and believe the matter to be secret, he himself cannot keep the secret which he desires me to keep, but presently betrays both me and himself, and goes his way.

FROM such foolish speech and such unwary people defend me, O Lord, that

I may not fall into their hands, nor ever commit the like.

GIVE to my mouth truth and constancy in my words, and remove far from me a crafty tongue.

WHAT I am not willing to suffer, I ought by all means to shun.

OH, how good and how peaceful it is to be silent about others, and not to believe all that is said, nor easily to report what one has heard; to lay one's self open to few; always to seek Thee, the Beholder of the heart, and not to be carried about with every wind of words; but to wish that all things, both within and without us, may be accomplished according to the pleasure of Thy will!

## Christ our Throne of Mercy

A throne shall be prepared in Mercy, and One shall sit upon it in truth in the Tabernacle of David. — *Is. 16 : 5.*

O LORD God, the just Judge, strong and patient, who knowest the frailty and perverseness of me, be Thou my strength, my entire confidence, for my own conscience sufficeth me not.

THOU knowest that which I know not; and therefore in every reprehension I ought to humble myself, and bear it with meekness.

PARDON me, I beesech Thee, in Thy mercy, as often as I have not done thus, and give me in future the grace to suffer still more.

FOR better to me is Thy great mercy, for the obtaining of pardon, than the

justice which I imagine in myself for the defence of my hidden conscience.

ALTHOUGH my conscience accuse me not, yet I cannot hereby justify myself; for setting Thy mercy aside, no man living shall be justified in Thy sight.

## Christ our Everlasting Joy

The redeemed of the Lord shall return and shall come into Sion with praise, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads. — *Is. 35 : 10.*

O MOST happy mansion of the city above! O most bright day of eternity, which knows no night, but is always enlightened by the Sovereign Truth! a day always joyful, always secure, and never changing its state for the contrary!

OH, that this day would shine upon us, and all those temporal things would come to an end!

IT shines indeed upon the saints, resplendent with everlasting brightness; but to us pilgrims upon earth it is seen only as afar off, and through a glass.

THE citizens of heaven know how joyful that day is; but we poor exiled

children of Eve mourn that this our day is bitter and tedious.

THE days of this life are short and evil, full of sorrows and miseries; where man is defiled with many sins, ensnared with many passions, attacked with many cares, encompassed with many errors, worn with many labors, troubled with temptations, weakened with pleasures, tormented with want.

OH, when will there be an end of these evils? When shall I be set at liberty from the wretched slavery of sin?

WHEN, O Lord, shall I think of Thee alone? When shall I fully rejoice in Thee?

WHEN shall I be without any impediment to true liberty, and without any trouble of mind or body?

WHEN shall I enjoy a solid peace never to be disturbed, and always secure,

a peace both within and without, and a peace every way secure?

GOOD Jesus, when shall I stand to behold Thee? When shall I contemplate the glory of Thy kingdom? When wilt Thou be all in all to me?

OH, when shall I be with Thee in Thy kingdom, which Thou hast prepared for Thy beloved from all eternity?

I AM left poor and exile in an enemy's country, where there are daily wars and grievous misfortunes.

COMFORT me in my banishment, soothe my sorrow; for my every desire aspires to Thee, and all that this world offers for my comfort is burdensome to me.

I LONG to enjoy thee intimately, but cannot attain to it.

I DESIRE to cleave to heavenly things, but the things of this life and my unmortified passions bear me down. I am willing in mind to be above all things, but by the flesh am forced against my will to be subject to them.

THUS, unhappy man that I am, I fight with myself, and am become burdensome to myself, whilst the spirit seeks to tend upwards, and the flesh downwards.

OH, what do I suffer interiorly, whilst in my mind I consider heavenly things; and presently a crowd of carnal thoughts interrupt my prayer! O my God, remove not Thyself afar from me, and depart not in anger from Thy servant.

DART forth Thy lightning, and disperse them; shoot Thy arrows, and let all the phantoms of the enemy be put to flight.

RECOLLECT my senses in Thee; make me forget all worldly things; give me

the grace speedily to cast away and to despise all wicked imaginations.

COME to my aid, O eternal Truth, that no vanity may move me.

COME, heavenly sweetness, and let all impurity fly from before Thy face.

PARDON me also, and mercifully forgive me the times that I have thought of anything else in prayer besides Thee.

FOR I confess truly that I am accustomed to be very much distracted.

FOR oftentimes I am not there where I am bodily standing or sitting, but am rather there where my thoughts carry me.

THERE is where I am, where my thought is; and there oftentimes is my thought where that is which I love.

THAT thing most readily comes to my mind which naturally delights me, or which through custom is pleasing to me.

FOR this reason Thou, who art the Truth, hast plainly said: Where thy treasure is there also is thy heart.

IF I love heaven I willingly think on heavenly things.

IF I love the world, I rejoice in the prosperity of the world, and am troubled at its adversity.

IF I love the flesh, my imagination is often taken up with the things of the flesh.

IF I love the spirit, I delight to think of spiritual things.

FOR whatsoever things I love, of the same I willingly speak and hear, and carry home with me the images of them.

BUT blessed is the man who for Thee, O Lord, abandons all things created; who offers violence to his nature, and through fervor of spirit crucifies the lusts of the flesh; that so, with a serene conscience, he may offer to thee pure prayer, and become worthy to be admitted among the choir of angels, having excluded himself both exteriorly and interiorly from all things of earth.

## Christ our Blessed Resignation

Behold, I come to do Thy will, O God.
I have desired it. — *Ps. 39 : 9.*

O LORD God, O holy Father, be Thou now forever blessed; for as Thou wilt, so is it done; and what Thou doest is always good.

LET Thy servant rejoice in Thee, not in himself, nor in any other; for Thou alone art true joy, Thou art my hope and my crown, my gladness and my honor, O Lord.

WHAT hath Thy servant but what he hath received from Thee, and this without any merit on his part? All things are Thine, which Thou hast given, and which Thou hast made.

I AM poor, and in labors from my youth; and my soul is saddened sometimes even unto tears, and sometimes,

too, my spirit is disturbed within itself by reason of impending suffering.

I LONG for the joy of peace; I beg for the peace of Thy children, who are fed by Thee in the light of Thy consolation.

IF Thou givest peace, if Thou infusest holy joy, the soul of Thy servant shall be full of melody, and devout in Thy praise.

BUT if Thou withdrawest Thyself, as Thou art very often accustomed to do, he will not be able to run in the way of Thy commandments; but rather must bow down his knees, and strike his breast, because it is not with him as it was yesterday, and the day before, when Thy lamp shone over his head, and he was protected under the shadow of Thy wings from temptations rushing in upon him.

O JUST Father, holy and always to be praised, the hour is come for Thy servant to be tried.

O FATHER, worthy of all love, it is fitting that Thy servant should at this hour suffer something for Thee.

O FATHER, always to be honored, the hour is come which Thou didst foresee from all eternity, that Thy servant for a short time should be oppressed exteriorly, but interiorly should ever live unto Thee; that he should be a little slighted and humbled, and should fail in the sight of men; that he should be severely afflicted with sufferings and disease, that so he may rise again with Thee in the dawning of a new light, and be glorified in heaven.

O HOLY Father, Thou hast so appointed, and such is Thy will; and that has come to pass which Thou hast ordained.

FOR this is a favor to Thy friend, that he should suffer and be afflicted in this world, for the love of Thee; how often soever, and by whomsoever Thou permittest it to befall him.

WITHOUT Thy design and providence, and without cause, nothing happens in this world.

IT is good for me, O Lord, that Thou hast humbled me, that I may learn Thy justifications, and that I may cast away from me all pride of heart and presumption.

IT is profitable for me that shame has covered my face, that I may rather seek my comfort from Thee than from men.

I HAVE also learned hereby to fear Thy impenetrable judgments, who afflictest the just together with the wicked, but not without equity and justice.

THANKS be to Thee, that Thou hast not spared me in my sufferings, but hast bruised me with bitter stripes, inflicting pains, and sending distress both within and without.

AND of all things under heaven, there is none can comfort me but Thou, O

Lord, my God, the heavenly physician of souls, who woundest and healest, bringest down to hell, and leadest back again.

THY discipline is upon me, and Thy rod itself shall instruct me.

BEHOLD, beloved Father, I am in Thy hands; I bow myself down under the rod of Thy correction.

STRIKE Thou my back and my neck, that I may bend my perversity to Thy will.

MAKE me a pious and humble disciple, as Thou in Thy goodness art wont to do, that I may walk according to every indication of Thy will.

TO Thee I commit myself and all that is mine, to be corrected by Thee; it is better to be chastised here than hereafter.

THOU knowest everything, and there is nothing in man's conscience hidden from Thee.

THOU knowest things to come before they happen; and Thou hast no need to be taught or admonished by any one of what is being done on earth.

THOU knowest what is expedient for my progress, and how serviceable tribulation is to rub away the rust of sin.

DO with me according to Thy good pleasure; it is what I desire; and despise not my sinful life, to no one better or more clearly known than to Thyself alone.

GRANT, O Lord, that I may know what I ought to know; that I may love what I ought to love; that I may praise that which is most pleasing to Thee; that I may esteem that which is valuable in Thy sight; that I may despise that which is despicable in thy eyes.

SUFFER me not to judge according to the sight of the outward eyes, nor to give sentence according to the hearing

of the ears of men, that know not what they are about; but to determine both of visible and spiritual matters with true judgment and above all things ever to seek Thy good will and pleasure.

## Christ our Royal Pardon

For I know that Thou art a gracious and merciful God, patient and of much compassion, and easy to forgive evil.
— *Jonas 4 : 2.*

LORD, I am not worthy of Thy consolation, or any spiritual visitation; and therefore Thou dealest justly with me, when Thou leavest me poor and desolate.

FOR if I could shed tears like a sea, yet should I not be worthy of Thy comfort.

WHEREFORE I deserve nothing else but to be scourged and punished, because I have grievously and often offended Thee, and in many things have very much sinned against Thee.

SO that, according to just reason, I do not deserve the least consolation.

BUT Thou, who art a good and merciful God, who wilt not have Thy works perish, to show the riches of Thy goodness towards the vessels of mercy, vouchsafest beyond all his deserts to comfort Thy servant above human measure.

FOR Thy consolations are not like the consolations of men.

WHAT have I done, O Lord, that Thou shouldst impart to me Thy heavenly comfort?

I CAN remember nothing of good that I have ever done, but that I was always prone to vice, and very slow towards amendment.

IT is the truth, and I cannot deny it. If I should say otherwise, Thou wouldst stand against me, and there would be none to defend me.

WHAT have I deserved for my sins but hell and everlasting fire? In truth,

I confess that I am worthy of all scorn and contempt, neither is it fitting that I should be named among Thy devout servants. And though it goes against me to hear this, yet for truth's sake I will condemn myself for my sins, that so I may the easier obtain Thy mercy.

WHAT shall I say, guilty as I am, and full of all confusion?

MY mouth can utter nothing but only this one word: I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned; have mercy on me and pardon me.

SUFFER me a little that I may mourn out my grief, before I go to the darksome land that is covered with the dismal shade of death.

WHAT dost Thou chiefly require of a guilty and wretched sinner, but that he should heartily repent and humble himself for his sins?

HUMBLE contrition for sins is an acceptable sacrifice to Thee, O Lord, of far sweeter odor in Thy sight than the burning of frankincense.

THIS is also that pleasing ointment which Thou wouldst have to be poured upon Thy sacred feet. For Thou never yet hast despised a contrite and humble heart.

## Christ our Holy Perseverance

Perfect Thou my goings in Thy paths;
that my footsteps be not moved.
— *Ps. 16 : 5.*

O LORD my God, who hast created me to Thy own image and likeness, grant me this grace, which Thou hast declared to be so great, and so necessary to salvation, that I may overcome my corrupt nature, which draws me to sin and perdition.

FOR I perceive in my flesh the law of sin contradicting the law of mind and leading me captive to obey the senses in many things; neither can I resist the passions thereof, unless assisted by Thy holy grace, infused with fervor into my heart.

I STAND in need of Thy grace, and of a great grace, to overcome nature, which is always prone to evil from its youth.

HENCE it is, O my God, that according to the inward man I am delighted with Thy law, knowing Thy command to be good, just and holy, both for the reproval of all evil and for the avoiding of all sin.

AND yet in the flesh I serve the law of sin, while I obey sensuality rather than reason.

HENCE it is, that to will that which is good is present with me, but how to accomplish it I find not.

HENCE I often make many good resolutions, but because I lack grace to help my weakness, through a slight resistance I recoil and fall off.

HENCE it comes to pass, that I know the way of perfection, and see clearly enough what I ought to do, but pressed down with the weight of my own corruption, I rise not to the things that are more perfect.

OH, how exceedingly necessary for me, O Lord, is Thy grace, to begin that which is good, to go forward with it, and to accomplish it!

FOR without it I can do nothing; but I can do all things in Thee, when Thy grace strengthens me.

O GRACE truly heavenly, without which we have no merits of our own, neither are any of the gifts of nature to be esteemed.

NO art or riches, no beauty or strength, no wit or eloquence, are of any worth with Thee, O Lord, without grace.

NOR even faith, nor hope, nor any other virtues, are acceptable to Thee without charity and grace.

O MOST blessed grace, which maketh the poor in spirit rich in virtues, and renderest him who is rich in many good things humble of heart!

COME, descend upon me, replenish me betimes with Thy consolation, lest my soul faint through weariness and dryness of mind.

I BESEECH Thee, O Lord, that I may find grace in Thy sight; for Thy grace is enough for me, though I obtain none of those things which nature desires.

IF I be tempted and afflicted with many tribulations, I will fear no evils whilst Thy grace is with me.

LET Thy grace, therefore, O Lord, always both go before me and follow me, and make me ever intent upon good works, through Jesus Christ Thy Son. Amen.

## Christ our Generous Reward

The just are waiting for me till Thou reward me. — *Ps. 141 : 8.*

LORD Jesus, forasmuch as Thy way is narrow, and despised by the world, grant that I may follow Thee, and be despised by the world.

FOR the servant is not greater than his Lord, neither is the disciple above his Master.

LORD Jesus, as Thou hast said and hast promised: He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and I will love him, and I will manifest Myself unto him, and I will make him sit with Me in the kingdom of My Father, so may it be indeed; and may it be my lot to merit it.

O LORD, blessed be this Thy word: I have received the cross, I have received

it from Thy hand: and I will bear it until death, as Thou hast laid it upon me. It is more sweet to my mouth than honey, and the honeycomb.

WHAT should I do in my so great tribulations and anguish, if Thou didst not encourage me with Thy holy words?

WHAT matter is it how much or what I suffer, so I come at length to the haven of salvation?

GRANT me a good end, grant me a happy passage out of this world; be ever mindful of me, O my God, and direct me in the right path to Thy kingdom. Amen.

## Christ our Priceless Ransom

The redeemed of the Lord shall return, and shall come into Sion with praise, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads. — *Is. 35 : 10.*

LORD, what is my confidence which I have in this life? or what is my greatest comfort amongst all things that appear under heaven?

IS it not Thou, my Lord God, whose mercies are without number?

WHERE was it ever well to me without Thee, or when was it ever ill with me when Thou wast present?

I HAD rather be poor for Thee, than rich without Thee.

I CHOOSE rather to sojourn upon earth with Thee, than to possess heaven without Thee. Where Thou art, there is heaven; and there is death and hell where Thou art not.

AFTER Thee I have a longing desire, and therefore must needs sigh after Thee, and cry and pray.

IN fine, I cannot fully trust in any one to bring me seasonable help in my necessities, save only in Thee, my God.

THOU art my hope, my confidence, my comforter, and in all things most faithful.

ALL seek the things that are their own; Thou designest only my salvation and profit, and turnest all things to my good.

AND although Thou exposest me to various temptations and adversities, yet all this Thou ordainest for my good, who art wont to prove Thy beloved servants a thousand ways.

UNDER which probation Thou oughtest not less to be loved and praised, than if Thou didst replenish me with heavenly consolations.

IN Thee, therefore, O Lord God, do I place all my hope and refuge; on Thee I cast all my tribulation and anguish; for I find all to be weak and inconstant whatever I behold out of Thee.

FOR neither will many friends be of service to me, nor can powerful auxiliaries assist me, nor wise counsellors give me a profitable reply, nor the books of the learned give me consolation, nor any precious substance ransom me, nor any secret place secure me, if Thou Thyself do not assist, help, strengthen, comfort, instruct and guard me.

FOR all things which seem to me to be for our peace and for our happiness, when Thou art absent, are nothing, and in truth contribute nothing to our felicity.

THOU therefore art the fountain of all good, the height of life, and the depth of wisdom: and to trust in Thee above all things is the greatest comfort of Thy servants.

UNTO Thee do I lift up mine eyes; in Thee, O my God, Father of mercies, I put my trust. Bless and sanctify my soul with Thy heavenly blessing, that it may be made Thy holy habitation, and the seat of Thy eternal glory; and let nothing be found in the temple of Thy divinity that may offend the eyes of Thy majesty.

ACCORDING to the greatness of Thy goodness, and the multitude of Thy tender mercies, look down upon me, and give ear to the prayer of Thy poor servant, who is in banishment afar off from Thee in the region of the shadow of death.

PROTECT and defend the soul of Thy poor servant amidst so many dangers of this corruptible life, and direct him in the company of Thy grace through the way of peace, to the country of everlasting light. Amen.

# The Mother of Christ

I will take hold of Thee, and bring Thee into my Mother's house.
— *Cant. 8 : 2.*

HAIL, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with Thee! Hail, Hope of the indigent, Mother of the motherless!

O MARY, my Mother, when my contrite heart is broken with sorrow and distress, and my soul is enveloped with sadness and fear; when the wind of temptation rages round me, and the storm of passion overwhelms my heart; when sin has closed for me the gates of heaven and deprived me of the friendship of my God; in that hour of tribulation and anguish, to whom shall I have recourse, if not to Thee, most blessed Mary, Consoler of the afflicted, and Refuge of sinners?

O MARY, Thou art truly that beautiful Star of the Sea that saves all those

who, in peril, raise their eyes towards Thee. I call Thee now to my aid, most merciful Mother of God. I fly to Thee with the confidence of a little child, who seeks refuge in the arms of its mother. Open Thine to me. Give me a place in Thy heart. Say to me: Fear not. I am Thy Advocate. I will speak for thee. As a mother consoles her weeping child, I will console thee. O my Mother, say these words, and peace shall return to my soul.

COME, O Mary, come with the sweetness which always accompanies Thee. Come to me in my trials. Come to encourage me and to bring me the grace of Thy divine Son, Jesus.

DEAREST Mother, no sooner have I confided to Thee my sorrows, than already I feel consoled. Thy name alone is balm for my wounds.

O NAME of Mary, name full of grace! Name which all lips should pronounce

with love, all hearts should bless. Heavenly and angelic name, be my consolation and strength now, and at the hour of my death. O Mary, Virgin Mother of Christ, may Thy blessed name and the adorable name of Jesus, be the last I shall pronounce on earth. Amen.

## Christ our Adorable Sacrament

I will set my tabernacle in the midst of you, and my soul shall not cast you off. — *Lev. 26 : 11.*

COME to Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you, saith the Lord.

THE bread which I will give is My flesh for the life of the world.

TAKE and eat; this is My body which shall be delivered for you; do this for the commemoration of Me.

HE that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me, and I in him.

THE words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

THESE are Thy words, O Christ, the eternal Truth, though not all delivered at one time, nor written in one place.

SINCE therefore they are Thine, and true, they ought all to be thankfully and faithfully received by me.

THEY are Thine, and Thou hast spoken them; and they are also mine, because Thou hast delivered them for my salvation.

I WILLINGLY receive them from Thy mouth, that they may be more closely ingrafted in my heart.

WORDS of so great tenderness, full of sweetness and love, encourage me; but my sins terrify me, and my unclean conscience keeps me back from approaching to so great mysteries.

THE sweetness of Thy words invites me, but the multitude of my offences weighs me down.

THOU commandest me to approach to Thee with confidence, if I would have part with Thee; and to receive the food of immortality, if I desire to obtain life and glory everlasting.

COME, Thou sayest to me, all you that labor, and are heavy burdened, and I will refresh you.

O SWEET and loving word in the ear of a sinner, that Thou, O Lord, my God, shouldst invite the poor and needy to the communion of Thy most sacred body!

BUT who am I, O Lord, that I should presume to come to Thee?

BEHOLD, the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; and Thou sayest: Come ye all to Me.

WHAT means this most loving condescension, and so friendly invitation?

HOW shall I dare to approach, who am conscious to myself of no good on which I can presume?

HOW shall I introduce Thee into my house, who have oftentimes provoked Thy indignation?

THE angels and the archangels stand in reverential awe; the saints and the just are afraid; and Thou sayest: Come ye all to Me.

UNLESS Thou, O Lord, didst say it, who could believe it to be true?

AND unless Thou didst command it, who would venture to approach?

BEHOLD, Noah, a just man, labored a hundred years in building the ark, that he with a few might be saved; and how shall I be able in the space of one hour to prepare myself to receive with reverence the Maker of the world?

MOSES, Thy great servant and Thy special friend, made an ark of incorruptible wood, which he also covered with the most pure gold, that he might deposit therein the tables of the law; and shall I, a miserable creature, presume so easily to receive Thee, the Maker of the law, and the Giver of life?

SOLOMON, the wisest of the kings of Israel, employed seven years in building a magnificent temple for the praise of Thy name, and for eight days together celebrated the feast of the dedication thereof; he offered a thousand pacific victims, and brought in a solemn manner the ark of the covenant into the place prepared for it, with sound of trumpet and rejoicing; and I, the most wretched, and the vilest of men, how shall I introduce Thee into my house, who can hardly spend one half hour devoutly? And would that I had ever spent one half hour as I ought!

O MY God, how much did they endeavor to do to please Thee! Alas, how

little it is that I do! How short a time do I spend, when I prepare myself to communicate!

SELDOM am I wholly recollected, very seldom free from all distraction.

AND yet surely, in the life-giving presence of Thy Deity, no unbecoming thought should occur, nor anything created occupy my mind; for it is not an angel, but the Lord of angels that I am about to entertain.

THERE is, moreover, a very great difference between the ark of the covenant with its relics, and Thy most pure body with its unspeakable virtues; between those sacrifices of the law, which were figures of things to come, and the true sacrifices.

WHY then am I not more inflamed, considering Thy venerable presence?

WHY do I not prepare myself with greater care to receive Thy sacred gifts,

seeing that these ancient holy patriarchs and prophets, yea, kings also and princes with the whole people, have shown so great affection of devotion towards Thy divine worship?

THE most devout king David danced with all his might before the ark of God, as he called to mind the benefits in times past bestowed upon his fathers. He made musical instruments of various kinds; he composed psalms, and appointed them to be sung with joy, and he himself likewise often sung them, playing upon his harp, inspired with the grace of the Holy Ghost. He taught the people of Israel to praise God with their whole heart, and to join their voices in blessing and magnifying Him every day.

IF so great devotion was then displayed, and such remembrance of the praise of God before the ark of the covenant, how great ought to be the reverence and devotion which I and all Christian people should have in the presence of this sacrament and in receiving the most precious Body of Christ?

MANY run to sundry places to visit the relics of the saints, and wonder to hear of their remarkable deeds; they behold the spacious buildings of their churches, and kiss their sacred bones, enveloped in silk and gold.

AND behold Thou art here present to me on the altar, my God, the Saint of Saints, the Creator of Men, and the Lord of Angels.

OFTENTIMES, in seeing those things, men are moved with curiosity, and the novelty of sights, and carry home but little fruit of amendment; and the more so when persons run lightly hither and thither without real contrition.

BUT here, in the sacrament of the altar, Thou art wholly present, my God, the Man Christ Jesus; where also the fruit of eternal salvation is plentifully reaped, as often as Thou art worthily and devoutly received.

AND to this we are not drawn by any levity, curiosity, or sensuality, but by a firm faith, a devout hope, and a sincere charity.

O GOD, the invisible Maker of the world, how wonderfully dost Thou deal with us! How sweetly and graciously dost Thou order all things in favor of Thy elect, to whom Thou offerest Thyself to be received in this sacrament!

FOR this exceeds all understanding; this, in a particular manner, draws the hearts of the devout, and enkindles their love.

FOR they Thy faithful ones, who dispose their whole life to amendment, frequently receive from this most august sacrament, a great grace of devotion and love of virtue.

OH, the wonderful and hidden grace of this sacrament which only the faithful of

Christ know, but which unbelievers, and such as are slaves to sin, cannot experience!

IN this sacrament is conferred spiritual grace; virtue lost is again restored to the soul; and beauty, disfigured by sin, returns again.

AND so great sometimes is this grace that, from the abundance of the devotion that is bestowed, not only the mind, but the frail body also feels a great increase of strength.

STILL must we lament and deplore exceedingly our tepidity and negligence, that we are not drawn with greater affection to receive Christ, in whom consists all the hope and merit of those that are to be saved.

FOR He is our sanctification and our redemption; He is the consolation of pilgrims, and the eternal beatitude of the saints.

IT is therefore much to be lamented that many take so little notice of this saving mystery, which rejoices heaven, and preserves the whole world.

OH, the blindness and hardness of the heart of man, that doth not consider so unspeakable a gift; and from a daily use of it falls into a disregard for it!

FOR if this most holy Sacrament were celebrated in one place only, and consecrated by only one priest in the world, how great a desire would men have to go to that place, and to such a priest of God, that they might see the divine Mysteries celebrated?

BUT now that there are many priests, and Christ is offered up in many places, that the grace and love of God to man may appear so much the greater, by how much the more this sacred Communion is distributed throughout the entire world.

THANKS be to Thee, O good Jesus, eternal Shepherd, who hast vouchsafed to feed us poor exiles with Thy precious Body and Blood, and to invite us to the receiving these mysteries with the words of Thy own mouth, saying: Come to Me all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you.

# Christ our Spiritual Refreshment

He hath set me in a place of pasture:
He hath brought me up on the water
of refreshment. — *Ps. 22 : 2.*

O LORD, trusting in Thy goodness and in Thy great mercy, I come sick to my Saviour, hungry and thirsty to the fountain of life, needy to the King of heaven, a servant to his Lord, a creature to his Creator, and one in desolation to his loving comforter.

BUT whence is this to me, that Thou shouldst come to me? Who am I, that Thou shouldst give Thyself to me?

HOW dare such a sinner appear before Thee? and how dost Thou vouchsafe to come to a sinner?

THOU knowest Thy servant, and Thou knowest that he has nothing of good in him that can entitle him to this favor.

I CONFESS therefore my unworthiness; I acknowledge Thy bounty; I praise Thy goodness; and I give thanks for Thy exceeding love.

FOR it is of Thy own mercy Thou dost this, not for my merits, that Thy goodness may be better known to me, that greater love may be imparted, and humility more perfectly commended.

SINCE therefore this pleaseth Thee, and Thou hast commanded it thus, Thy merciful condescension pleaseth me also; and, Oh, that my iniquity may be no obstacle!

O MOST sweet and most bountiful Jesus, how great reverence and thanks, with perpetual praise, are due to Thee, for the receiving of Thy sacred body, whose dignity no man can sufficiently express!

BUT on what shall I think in this Communion, when I approach to my

Lord, whom I can never duly venerate, and yet desire to receive with devotion?

WHAT can I think on better or more wholesome to my soul, than to humble myself entirely in Thy presence, and extol Thy infinite goodness?

I PRAISE Thee, O my God, and I extol Thee forever; I despise myself, and cast myself down into the depth of my own vileness.

BEHOLD, Thou art the Saint of Saints, and I am the greatest of sinners.

BEHOLD, Thou bowest Thyself down to me, who am not worthy to look up to Thee.

BEHOLD, Thou comest to me; Thou wishest to be with me; Thou invitest me to Thy banquet; Thou desirest to give me heavenly food, even the bread of angels, to eat; no other, indeed, than

Thyself, the living Bread, who didst come down from heaven, and givest life to the world.

BEHOLD, whence love proceeds, what a bounty shines forth! How great thanks and praises are due to Thee for these things!

OH, how salutary and profitable was Thy design when Thou didst institute it! How sweet and delightful this banquet, in which Thou givest Thyself to be our food!

OH, how admirable is Thy work, O Lord! how mighty Thy power! how infallible Thy truth!

FOR Thou hast spoken, and all things were made, and that which Thou commandest has been done.

A WONDERFUL thing it is, and worthy of faith, and exceeding all human understanding, that Thou, O Lord my

God, true God, and true man, art contained whole and entire under a small form of bread and wine, art eaten by the receiver, without being consumed.

THOU, the Lord of all things, who standest in need of no one, art pleased by this Sacrament to dwell in us.

PRESERVE my heart and my body without stain, that with a joyful and clean conscience I may be able often to celebrate Thy sacred Mysteries, and to receive for my eternal salvation, what Thou hast principally ordained and instituted for Thy honor and perpetual remembrance.

REJOICE, O my soul, and give thanks to thy God for so noble a gift, and so singular a solace left to thee in this vale of tears.

## Christ our Heavenly Bread

This is the Bread which the Lord hath given you to eat. — *Ex. 16 : 15.*

BEHOLD I come to Thee, O Lord, that by Thy gift, it may be well with me, and that I may be delighted in Thy holy banquet, which Thou, O God, in Thy sweetness hast prepared for the poor.

BEHOLD, in Thee is all whatsoever I can or ought to desire; Thou art my salvation and my redemption, my hope and my strength, my honor and my glory.

MAKE therefore the soul of Thy servant joyful this day, because, O Lord Jesus, I have lifted up my soul to Thee.

NOW I desire to receive Thee devoutly and reverently; I long to bring Thee into my house, so that, with Zaccheus, I may

deserve to be blessed by Thee, and to be numbered among the children of Abraham.

MY soul longs to be nourished with Thy body; my heart desires to be united with Thee.

GIVE Thyself to me, and it is enough; for without Thee no comfort is of any avail.

WITHOUT Thee I cannot exist; and without Thy visitation I cannot live.

THEREFORE must I often come to Thee and receive Thee as the health and strength of my soul; lest perhaps I faint in the way, if I be deprived of this heavenly food.

FOR so Thou, O most merciful Jesus, when Thou hadst been preaching to the people and curing their various diseases, didst say: I will not send them fasting to their homes, lest they faint on the way.

DEAL now in like manner with me, Thou who hast left Thyself in this Sacrament for the comfort of Thy faithful.

FOR Thou art the most sweet refection of the soul; and he that shall eat Thee worthily shall be partaker and heir of everlasting glory.

IT is indeed necessary for me, who so often fall and commit sin, and so quickly become tepid and faint, that, by frequent prayers and confession, and by the sacred receiving of Thy Body, I may again be renewed, cleansed, and inflamed, lest, perhaps, by longer abstaining, I fall away from my holy purpose.

FOR the senses of man are prone to evil from his youth; and unless Thy divine medicine help him, he quickly falls to worse.

THE holy Communion therefore withdraws him from evil, and strengthens him in good.

FOR if I am so often negligent and lukewarm now when I communicate, what would it be if I did not take this remedy, and did not seek so great a help?

AND although I am not every day fit, nor well disposed to receive Thy sacred Body, yet I will endeavor at proper times to receive the divine mysteries, and to make myself partaker of so great a grace.

FOR this is the principal comfort of a faithful soul, so long as it sojourns afar off from Thee in this mortal body; being mindful often of its God, to receive its Beloved with a devout mind.

O HAPPY mind, and blessed soul, which deserves to receive Thee her Lord God devoutly; and in receiving Thee to be filled with spiritual joy!

OH, how great a Lord does she entertain, how beloved a Guest does she bring into her house, how sweet a Companion does she receive, how faithful a Friend does she welcome, how beautiful and

how noble a Spouse does she embrace, who deserves to be loved above all, and beyond all that can be desired!

LET heaven and earth, with all their attire, be silent in Thy presence, O my dearest Beloved; for whatever praise or beauty they have, is all the gift of Thy bounty; nor can they attain to the beauty of Thy name, of whose wisdom there is no end.

## Christ our Fountain of Sweetness

> Thou didst feed Thy people with the Food of Angels, and gavest them Bread from Heaven prepared without labour; having in it all that is delicious, and the sweetness of every taste.
>
> — *Wis. 16 : 20.*

O LORD, my God, prevent thy servant with blessings of Thy sweetness, that I may approach worthily and devoutly to Thy most holy Sacrament.

RAISE up my heart toward Thee, and deliver me from oppressive slothfulness.

VISIT me with Thy saving mercy, that I may taste in spirit Thy sweetness, which plentifully lies hid in this sacrament, as in a fountain.

ILLUMINATE also my eyes to behold so great a Mystery, and strengthen me to believe it with an undoubting faith.

FOR it is Thy work, not the power of man; Thy sacred institution, not man's invention.

FOR no man can be found able of himself to know and understand these things, which surpass even the intelligence of the angels.

WHAT, shall I, therefore, an unworthy sinner, who am but dust and ashes, be able to search into or comprehend so high and so sacred a mystery?

O LORD, in the simplicity of my heart, with a good and firm faith, and in obedience to Thy command, I come to Thee with hope and reverence; and I believe truly that Thou art here present in this Sacrament, both God and man.

IT is then Thy will that I should receive Thee, and through love unite myself to Thee.

WHEREFORE I implore Thy mercy; and I beg of Thee to give me a special

grace, that I may be wholly dissolved in Thee, and overflow with Thy love, and no more concern myself about any other kind of consolation.

FOR this most high and most excellent Sacrament is the health of soul and body, the remedy of all spiritual diseases, by which my vices are cured, my passions restrained, temptations overcome or lessened, greater grace infused, virtue increased, faith confirmed, hope strengthened, charity inflamed and increased.

FOR Thou hast bestowed, and still oftentimes dost bestow, many good things in this sacrament to Thy beloved, who communicate devoutly, O my God, the support of my soul, the repairer of human infirmity, and the giver of all interior comfort.

FOR Thou impartest unto them much consolation, to support them in their many troubles; and Thou liftest them up from the depth of their own dejection,

to the hope of Thy protection; and Thou dost interiorly recreate and enlighten them with a certain new grace; so that they who at first were anxious, and without sensible affection before Communion after being refreshed with this heavenly food and drink, find themselves changed for the better.

AND in such a way Thou art pleased to deal with Thy elect, that they may more truly acknowledge and plainly experience how great is their weakness, when left to themselves, and how much of bounty and grace they receive from Thee.

FOR of themselves they are cold, dry, and indevout; but by Thee they are made fervent, cheerful and devout.

FOR who, humbly approaching to the fountain of sweetness, does not carry away with him some little sweetness?

OR who, standing by a great fire, does not receive from it some little heat?

AND Thou art a fountain ever full and overflowing; Thou art a fire always burning and never failing.

WHEREFORE, if I may not draw out of the fulness of the fountain, nor drink my fill, I will at least set my mouth to the orifice of this heavenly pipe, that so I may draw thence some little drop to allay my thirst, and may not wholly wither away.

AND if as yet I cannot be all heavenly and all on fire, like the cherubim and seraphim, I will still endeavor to follow after devotion, and prepare my heart, that so I may acquire some small spark of divine fire by humbly receiving this life-giving Sacrament.

AND whatever is wanting to me, O good Jesus, most blessed Saviour, do Thou in Thy bounty and goodness supply for me, who hast vouchsafed to call all unto Thee, saying: Come to Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.

I LABOR indeed in the sweat of my brow, I am tormented with grief of heart, I am laden with sins, I am troubled with temptations, and am entangled and oppressed with many evil passions; and there is no one to help me, no one to deliver and save me, but Thou, O Lord God, my Saviour, to whom I commit myself and all that is mine, that Thou mayest keep me, and bring me to everlasting life.

RECEIVE me for the praise and glory of Thy name, who hast prepared Thy Body and Blood for my food and drink.

GRANT, O Lord God, my Saviour, that the frequenting of this Thy Mystery may increase the affection of my devotion.

## Christ our Devout Preparation

The Lord has heard the desire of the poor; thy ears, O Lord, have heard the preparation of their hearts. — *Ps. 9 : 38.*

WHEN I consider Thy dignity, O Lord, and my own vileness, I tremble very much, and am confounded within myself.

FOR if I come not to Thee, I fly from life; and if I intrude myself unworthily, I incur Thy displeasure.

WHAT then shall I do, O my God, my Helper, my Counsellor in necessities?

DO Thou teach me the right way; set before me some short exercise suitable for Holy Communion.

FOR it is well to know in what manner I shall reverently and devoutly prepare my heart for Thee, for the profitable receiving of Thy Sacrament, or for celebrating so great and divine a sacrifice.

## Christ our Clean Oblation

For from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof My Name is great among the gentiles; and in every place there is sacrifice; and there is offered to My Name a clean oblation.
— *Mal. 1 : 11.*

LORD, all things are Thine that are in heaven and upon earth.

I DESIRE to offer up myself to Thee as a voluntary oblation, and to remain forever Thine.

LORD, in the sincerity of my heart, I offer myself to Thee this day, as Thy servant forevermore, for Thy homage, and for a sacrifice of perpetual praise.

RECEIVE me with this sacred Oblation of Thy precious Body, which I offer to Thee this day in the invisible presence

of assisting angels, that it may be for mine and all the people's salvation.

FORGIVE, O my God, forgive me my sins, for the sake of Thy holy name. Save my soul which Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood.

BEHOLD, I commit myself to Thy mercy; I resign myself into Thy hands.

DEAL with me according to Thy goodness, not according to my wickedness and iniquity.

I OFFER also to Thee all the good I have, though very little and imperfect; that Thou mayest make it better and sanctify it; that Thou mayest be pleased with it and make it acceptable to Thee and perfect it more and more; and mayest moreover bring me, who am a slothful and unprofitable creature, to a blissful and glorious end.

I OFFER to Thee also all the pious desires of devout persons; the necessities

of my parents, friends, brothers, sisters, and all those that are dear to me; and of all such as, for the love of Thee, have been benefactors to me or others; and who have desired and besought me to offer up prayers and masses for themselves and all theirs, whether they are still living in the flesh or are already dead to this world; that all may experience the assistance of Thy grace, the benefit of Thy comfort, protection from all dangers, and deliverance from the punishment to come; and that, thus freed from all evils, they may with joy give worthy thanks to Thee.

I OFFER up also to Thee my prayers, and this sacrifice of Propitiation, for those in particular who have in anything wronged me, grieved me, or abused me, or have inflicted upon me any hurt or injury.

AND for all those likewise whom I have at any time grieved, troubled, injured, or scandalized, by words or deeds, knowingly or unknowingly; that it may please Thee

to forgive us all our sins and mutual offences.

TAKE, O Lord, from our hearts all jealousy, indignation, wrath, and contention, and whatsoever may hurt charity, and lessen brotherly love.

HAVE mercy, O Lord, have mercy on those that crave Thy mercy; give grace to the needy; and grant that we may be worthy to enjoy Thy grace, and that we may attain to life everlasting. Amen.

## Christ our Celestial Banquet

They shall be inebriated with the plenty of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of Thy pleasure. — *Ps. 35 : 9.*

O SWEETEST Lord Jesus, how great sweetness hath a devout soul that feasteth with Thee in Thy banquet; where there is no other meat set before her to be eaten but Thyself, her only Beloved, and most to be desired above all the desires of her heart!

AND to me indeed it would be delightful to pour out tears in Thy presence, with the whole affection of my heart, and like the devout Magdalen to wash Thy feet with my tears.

BUT where is this devotion, where is this so plenteous effusion of holy tears?

SURELY in the sight of Thee, and of Thy holy angels, my whole heart ought to be inflamed, and to weep for joy.

FOR I have Thee in the Sacrament truly present, though hidden under another form.

FOR to behold Thee in Thine own divine brightness, is what mine eyes would not be able to endure, neither could the whole world subsist in the splendor of the glory of Thy majesty.

IN this, therefore, Thou dost stoop to my weakness, that Thou dost conceal Thyself under the Sacrament.

I TRULY have and adore Him whom the angels adore in heaven; but I as yet in faith, they indeed by sight and without a veil.

I MUST be content with the light of true faith, and walk therein till the day of eternal brightness break forth, and the shadows of figures shall have passed away.

BUT when that which is perfect shall come, the use of sacraments shall cease;

for the blessed in heavenly glory need not the aid of the sacraments.

FOR they rejoice without end in the presence of God, beholding His glory face to face; and being transformed from glory into the glory of the incomprehensible Deity, they taste the Word of God made flesh, as He was from the beginning, and remaineth forever.

WHEN I call to mind these wonders, every spiritual comfort whatsoever becomes tedious to me; because, as long as I behold not my Lord openly in His glory, I make no account of all that I see and hear in the world.

THOU art my witness, O God, that no one thing can comfort me, nor anything created give me rest, but only Thou, My God, whom I desire to contemplate for eternity.

BUT this is not possible so long as I remain in this mortal life.

AND therefore I must endeavor to acquire much patience, and submit myself to Thee in all my desires.

FOR thus also Thy Saints, O Lord, who now exult with Thee in the Kingdom of heaven, during life awaited in faith and much patience the advent of Thy glory.

WHAT they believed, I believe; what they hoped for, I hope for; and whither they are gone, I trust that I also, through Thy grace, shall go.

IN the meantime I will walk in faith, strengthened by the examples of Thy saints.

I SHALL have moreover for my comfort, and the direction of my life, Thy holy books; and above all these, Thy most holy Body for my special remedy and refuge.

FOR in this life I find there are two things especially necessary for me, with-

out which this miserable life would be to me insupportable.

WHILST I am kept in the prison of this body, I acknowledge myself to need two things, namely, food and light.

THOU hast therefore given to me, weak as I am, Thy sacred Body for the nourishment of my soul and body, and Thou hast set Thy Word as a light to my feet.

WITHOUT these two I could not well live; for the Word of God is the light of my soul, and Thy Sacrament is the bread of life.

THESE also may be called the two tables set on either side, in the storehouse of Thy holy church.

ONE is the table of the holy altar having the holy bread, that is, the precious Body of Christ; the other is that of the

Divine Law, containing holy doctrine, teaching a right faith, and leading most securely, even to the interior of the veil, where is the Holy of holies.

THANKS be to Thee, O Lord Jesus, Light of eternal Light, for the table of holy doctrine which Thou hast afforded us by the ministry of Thy servants, the prophets and apostles, and other teachers.

THANKS be to Thee, O Thou Creator and Redeemer of men, who, to manifest Thy love to the whole world, hast prepared a great supper, wherein Thou hast set before us to be eaten, not the typical lamb, but Thy most sacred Body and Blood; rejoicing all the faithful with Thy holy banquet, and replenishing them with the chalice of salvation, in which are all the delights of paradise; and the holy angels do feast with us, but with a more happy sweetness.

O LORD of Majesty, grant that we may bless Thee with our lips.

OH, how pure ought to be the mouth, how holy the body, how immaculate the heart into which the Author of Purity so often enters!

FROM the mouth of him who receives the Sacrament of Christ nothing but what is holy, no word but what is becoming and profitable, ought to proceed.

SIMPLE and chaste should be those eyes which are accustomed to behold the Body of Christ.

LET Thy grace, O God omnipotent, assist us, that we may be enabled to serve Thee worthily and devoutly, in all purity, and with a good conscience.

AND if we cannot live in so great innocence of life as we ought, grant us still duly to bewail the sins we have committed, and in the spirit of humility, and the purpose of a good will, to serve Thee more fervently for the future.

## Christ our Sovereign Peace

The Lord will bless His people with peace. — *Ps. 28 : 11.*

OH, that it were given me, gracious Lord, to find Thee alone, that I may open my whole heart to Thee, and enjoy Thee as my soul desireth; no one beholding me, nor any creature interesting me, or at all affecting me; but Thou alone speaking to me and I to Thee; as the beloved is wont to speak to his beloved, and a friend to entertain himself with his friend!

FOR this I pray, this I desire, that I may be wholly united to Thee, and that I may withdraw my heart from all created things; and by Holy Communion, and often celebrating, I may more and more learn to relish things heavenly and eternal.

AH, Lord God, when shall I be wholly united to Thee, and absorbed in Thee, and altogether forgetful of myself?

THOU in me, and I in Thee; and so grant us both to continue in one.

VERILY, thou art my Beloved, the choicest amongst thousands, in whom my soul is well pleased to dwell all the days of its life.

VERILY, Thou art my Peace-maker, in whom is sovereign peace and true rest; out of whom is labor and sorrow and endless misery.

THOU art, in truth, a hidden God, and Thy counsel is not with the wicked; but Thy conversation is with the humble and the simple.

OH, how sweet is Thy spirit, O Lord, who, to show Thy sweetness towards Thy children, vouchsafest to refresh them with the most delicious bread which cometh down from heaven!

SURELY, there is no other nation so great, that hath its gods so nigh to it,

as Thou, our God, art present to all Thy faithful; to whom, for their daily comfort, and for the raising up their hearts to heaven, Thou givest Thyself to be eaten and enjoyed.

FOR what other nation is there so honored as the Christian people?

OR what creature under heaven so beloved as a devout soul, to whom God cometh that He may feed her with His glorious flesh? O unspeakable grace! O wonderful condescension! O infinite love, singularly bestowed upon man!

BUT what shall I render to the Lord for this grace, for charity so remarkable?

THERE is not anything that I can present to Him more acceptable than to give up my heart entirely to God, and closely unite it to Him.

THEN all that is within me shall rejoice exceedingly when my soul shall be

perfectly united to my God; then will He say to me: If thou wilt be with me, I will be with thee; and I will answer Him: Vouchsafe, O Lord, to remain with me, and I will willingly be with Thee.

THIS is my whole desire, that my heart may be united to Thee.

## Christ our Abiding Presence

Though I should walk in the midst of the shadows of death, I will fear no evils for Thou art with me. — *Ps. 22 : 4.*

OH, how great is the multitude of Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou hast hidden for them that fear Thee!

WHEN, O Lord, I call to mind some devout persons, who come to Thy Sacrament with the greatest devotion and affection, I am often confounded and ashamed within myself, that I approach so tepidly and coldly to Thy altar, and to the table of Holy Communion; that I remain so dry, and without affection of heart; that I am not wholly set on fire in Thy presence, O my God, nor so earnestly drawn onwards and affected, as many devout persons have been, who from a vehement desire of Communion, and a sensible love in their hearts, could not contain themselves from weeping;

but with their whole souls eagerly thirsted to approach, both with the mouth of their heart and their body, to Thee, O God, the living fountain; being in no wise able to moderate or satisfy their hunger, but by receiving Thy body with all joy and spiritual eagerness.

OH, truly the ardent faith of these persons is an existing argument of Thy sacred presence!

FOR they truly know their Lord in the breaking of bread, whose heart burneth so mightily within them, from Jesus walking with them.

ALAS, far from me too often is such affection and devotion, such vehement love and ardor.

BE Thou merciful to me, O good Jesus, sweet and gracious, and grant thy poor suppliant to feel sometimes at least in the sacred Communion some little of the cordial affection of Thy love, that my

faith may be more strengthened, my hope in Thy goodness increased, and that my charity being once perfectly enkindled, and having tasted the manna of heaven, may never die away.

FOR mighty is Thy mercy to grant me the grace I long for, and to visit me in Thy great clemency with the spirit of fervor when the day of Thy good pleasure shall have come.

FOR though I burn not at present with so great desire as those that are so singularly devoted to Thee; yet, by Thy grace, I desire to have this same greatly inflamed desire; praying and wishing that I may be made partaker with all such Thy fervent lovers, and numbered in their holy company.

## Christ our Internal Union

I will dwell in the midst of thee.
— *Za. 2 : 10.*

O MOST sweet and loving Lord, whom I now desire to receive with all devotion, Thou knowest my weakness and the necessity which I endure, in how great evils and vices I am immersed, how often I am oppressed, tempted, troubled and defiled.

TO Thee I come for remedy; to Thee do I pray for consolation and relief; I speak to Him who knows all things, to whom all that is within me is manifest, and who alone can perfectly comfort and help me.

THOU knowest what good things I stand most in need of, and how poor I am in virtues.

BEHOLD I stand before Thee, poor and naked, begging Thy grace, and imploring Thy mercy.

FEED Thy hungry suppliant; inflame my coldness with the fire of Thy love; enlighten my blindness with the brightness of Thy presence.

TURN for me all earthly things into bitterness, all things grievous and adverse into patience, and all low and created things into contempt and oblivion.

LIFT up my heart to Thee in heaven, and suffer me not to wander upon earth.

MAYEST Thou alone be delightful to me henceforth and for evermore.

FOR Thou only art my meat and drink, my love and my joy, my sweetness and all my good.

OH, that with Thy presence Thou wouldst inflame, consume, and transform me into Thyself, that I may be made one spirit with Thee by the grace of internal union, and by the melting of ardent love!

SUFFER me not to go from Thee hungry and dry, but deal with me in Thy mercy, as Thou hast often dealt wonderfully with Thy Saints.

WHAT marvel, if I should be wholly set on fire by Thee, and should die to myself, since Thou art a Fire always burning, and never failing, a Love purifying the heart and enlightening the understanding!

## Christ our Eternal Blessing

Thou openest Thy hand and fillest with blessing every living creature. — *Ps. 144 : 16.*

WITH the greatest devotion and burning love, with all the affection and fervor of my heart, I desire to receive Thee, O Lord; as many saints and devout persons, who were most pleasing to Thee in holiness of life, and most fervent in devotion, have desired Thee, in Holy Communion.

O MY God, eternal Love, my whole good, and never-ending happiness, I would gladly receive Thee with the most vehement desire, and most worthy reverence, that any of the saints have ever had, or could experience.

AND although I am unworthy to have all those feelings of devotion, yet I offer to Thee the whole affection of my heart, as if I alone had all those highly pleasing inflamed desires.

YEA, and whatsoever a pious mind can conceive and desire, all this, with the greatest reverence and most inward affection, I offer and present to Thee.

I DESIRE to reserve nothing to myself, but freely and most willingly to sacrifice myself, and all that is mine, to Thee.

O LORD my God, my Creator and Redeemer, I desire to receive Thee this day with such affection, reverence, praise, and honor; such gratitude, worthiness, and love; such faith, hope, and purity, as Thy most holy Mother, the glorious Virgin Mary, received and desired Thee, when she humbly and devoutly answered the angel who declared to her the mystery of the incarnation: Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to Thy word.

AND as Thy blessed precursor, the most excellent among the saints, John the Baptist, in Thy presence leaped for joy through the Holy Ghost, while he

was yet enclosed in his mother's womb, and afterwards seeing Jesus walking among men, humbling himself exceedingly, with devout affection said: The friend of the bridegroom that standeth and heareth Him, rejoiceth with joy for the voice of the bridegroom; so I also wish to be inflamed with great and holy desires, and to present myself to Thee with my whole heart.

WHEREFORE I here offer and present to Thee the joys of all devout hearts, their ardent affection, their ecstasies, and supernatural illuminations and heavenly visions, together with all the virtues and praises that are or shall be celebrated by all creatures in heaven and earth, for myself and all such as have been recommended to my prayers, that by all Thou mayest be worthily praised and glorified forever.

RECEIVE my prayers, O Lord my God, and my desires of giving Thee infinite praise and boundless blessing, which, according to the multitude of

Thy unspeakable greatness, are most justly due to Thee.

THESE I render, and desire to render Thee every day and every moment; and I invite and entreat all the heavenly spirits and all the faithful, by prayers and affections, to render with me thanksgiving and praise.

LET all people, tribes, and tongues praise Thee, and magnify Thy holy and sweet name, with the highest jubilation and ardent devotion.

AND let all who reverently and devoutly celebrate Thy most high sacrament, and receive it with full faith, find grace and mercy at Thy hands, and humbly pray for me, a sinful creature.

AND when they shall have obtained their wished-for devotion and blissful union, and shall retire from thy sacred heavenly table, fully comforted and wonderfully refreshed, let them vouchsafe to remember my poor soul.

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